No. 4. *(Price One Shilling.)* MAY, 1850.

With an Etching by W. H. Deverell.

Art and Poetry:

Being Thoughts towards Nature

Conducted principally by Artists.

When whoso merely hath a little thought
Will plainly think the thought which is in him,—
Not imaging another's bright or dim,
Not mangling with new words what others taught;
When whoso speaks, from having either sought
Or only found,—will speak, not just to skim
A shallow surface with words made and trim,
But in that very speech the matter brought:
Be not too keen to cry—"So this is all!—
A thing I might myself have thought as well,
But would not say it, for it was not worth!"
Ask: "Is this truth?" For is it still to tell
That, be the theme a point or the whole earth,
Truth is a circle, perfect, great or small?

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The Subscribers to this Work are respectfully informed that the future Numbers will appear on the last day of the Month for which they are dated. Also, that a supplementary, or large-sized Etching will occasionally be given.

W.H.D

Viola and Olivia.

When Viola, a servant of the Duke,
Of him she loved the page, went, sent by him,
To tell Olivia that great love which shook
His breast and stopt his tongue; was it a whim,
Or jealousy or fear that she must look
Upon the face of that Olivia?

'Tis hard to say if it were whim or fear
Or jealousy, but it was natural,
As natural as what came next, the near
Intelligence of hearts: Olivia
Loveth, her eye abused by a thin wall
Of custom, but her spirit's eyes were clear.

Clear? we have oft been curious to know
The after-fortunes of those lovers dear;
Having a steady faith some deed must show
That they were married souls—unmarried here—
Having an inward faith that love, called so
In verity, is of the spirit, clear
Of earth and dress and sex—it may be near
What Viola returned Olivia?

A Dialogue on Art.

[*** The following paper had been sent as a contribution to this publication scarcely more than a week before its author, Mr. John Orchard, died. It was written to commence a series of "Dialogues on Art," which death has rendered for ever incomplete: nevertheless, the merits of this commencement are such that they seemed to warrant its publication as a fragment; and in order that the chain of argument might be preserved, so far as it goes, uninterrupted, the dialogue is printed entire in the present number, despite its length. Of the writer, but little can be said. He was an artist; but ill health, almost amounting to infirmity—his portion from childhood—rendered him unequal to the bodily labour inseparable from his profession: and in the course of his short life, whose youth was scarcely consummated, he exhibited, from time to time, only a very few small pictures, and these, as regards public recognition, in no way successfully. In art, however, he gave to the "seeing eye," token of that ability and earnestness which the "hearing ear" will not fail to recognize in the dialogue now published; where the vehicle of expression, being more purely intellectual, was more within his grasp than was the physical and toilsome embodiment of art.

It is possible that a search among the papers he has left, may bring to light a few other fugitive pieces, which will, in such event, as the Poem succeeding this Dialogue, be published in these pages.

To the end that the Author's scheme may be, as far as is now possible, understood and appreciated, we subjoin, in his own words, some explanation of his further intent, and of the views and feelings which guided him in the composition of the dialogue:—

"I have adopted the form of dialogue for several, to me, cogent reasons; 1st, because it gives the writer the power of exhibiting the question, Art, on all its sides; 2nd, because the great phases of Art could be represented idiosyncratically; and, to make this clear, I have named the several speakers accordingly; 3rd, because dialogue secures the attention; and, that secured, deeper things strike, and go deeper than otherwise they could be made to; and, 4th and last, because all my earliest and most delightful pleasures associate themselves with dialogue,—(the old dramatists, Lucian, Walter Savage Landor, &c.)

"You will find that I have not made one speaker say a thing on purpose for another to condemn it; but that I make each one utter his wisest in the very wisest manner he can, or rather, that I can for him.

"The further continuation of this 1st dialogue embraces the question *Nature*, and its processes, invention and imitation,—imitation chiefly. Kosmon begins by showing, in illustration of the truth of Christian's concluding sentences, how imperfectly all the Ancients, excepting the Hebrews, loved, understood, or felt Nature, &c. This is not an unimportant portion of Art knowledge.

"I must not forget to say that the last speech of Kosmon will be answered by Christian when they discourse of imitation. It properly belongs to imitation; and, under that head, it can be most effectively and perfectly confuted. Somewhat after this idea, the "verticalism" and "involution" will be shown to be direct from Nature; the gilding, &c., disposed of on the ground of the old piety using the most precious materials as the most religious and worthy of them; and hence, by a very easy and probable transition, they concluded that that which was most soul-worthy, was also most natural."]

Dialogue I., in the House of Kalon.

KALON. Welcome, my friends:—this day above all others; to-day is the first day of spring. May it be the herald of a bountiful year,—not alone in harvests of seeds. Great impulses are moving through man; swift as the steam-shot shuttle, weaving some mighty pattern, goes the new birth of mind. As yet, hidden from eyes is the design: whether it be poetry, or painting, or music, or architecture, or whether it be a divine harmony of all, no manner of mind can tell; but that it is mighty, all manners of minds, moved to involuntary utterance, affirm. The intellect has at last again got to work upon thought: too long fascinated by matter and prisoned to motive geometry, genius—wisdom seem once more to have become human, to have put on man, and to speak with divine simplicity. Kosmon, Sophon, again welcome! your journey is well-timed; Christian, my young friend, of whom I have often written to you, this morning tells me by letter that to-day he will pay me his long-promised visit. You, I know, must rejoice to meet him: this interchange of knowledge cannot fail to improve us, both by knocking down and building up: what is true we shall hold in common; what is false not less in common detest. The debateable ground, if at last equally debateable as it was at first, is yet ploughed; and some after-comer may sow it with seed, and reap therefrom a plentiful harvest.

SOPHON. Kalon, you speak wisely. Truth hath many sides like a diamond with innumerable facets, each one alike brilliant and piercing. Your information respecting your friend Christian has not a little interested me, and made me desirous of knowing him.

KOSMON. And I, no less than Sophon, am delighted to hear that we shall both see and taste your friend.

SOPHON. Kalon, by what you just now said, you would seem to think a dearth of original thought in the world, at any time, was an evil: perhaps it is not so; nay, perhaps, it is a good! Is not an interregnum of genius necessary somewhere? A great genius, sun-like, compels lesser suns to gravitate with and to him; and this is subversive of originality. Age is as visible in thought as it is in man. Death is indispensably requisite for a *new* life. Genius is like a tree, sheltering and affording support to numberless creepers and climbers, which latter die and live many times before their protecting tree does; flourishing even whilst that decays, and thus, lending to it a greenness not its own; but no new life can come out of that

expiring tree; it must die: and it is not until it is dead, and fallen, and *rotted into compost*, that another tree can grow there; and many years will elapse before the new birth can increase and occupy the room the previous one occupied, and flourish anew with a greenness all its own. This on one side. On another; genius is essentially imitative, or rather, as I just now said, gravitative; it gravitates towards that point peculiarly important at the moment of its existence; as air, more rarified in some places than in others, causes the winds to rush towards *them* as toward a centre: so that if poetry, painting, or music slumbers, oratory may ravish the world, or chemistry, or steam-power may seduce and rule, or the sciences sit enthroned. Thus, nature ever compensates one art with another; her balance alone is the always just one; for, like her course of the seasons, she grows, ripens, and lies fallow, only that stronger, larger and better food may be reared.

KALON. By your speaking of chemistry, and the mechanical arts and sciences, as periodically ruling the world along with poetry, painting, and music,—am I to understand that you deem them powers intellectually equal, and to require of their respective professors as mighty, original, and *human* a genius for their successful practice?

KOSMON. Human genius! why not? Are they not equally human?—nay, are they not—especially steam-power, chemistry and the electric telegraph—more—eminently more—useful to man, more radically civilizers, than music, poetry, painting, sculpture, or architecture?

KALON. Stay, Kosmon! whither do you hurry? Between chemistry and the mechanical arts and sciences, and between poetry, painting, and music, there exists the whole totality of genius—of genius as distinguished from talent and industry. To be useful alone is not to be great: *plus* only is *plus*, and the sum is *minus* something and *plus* in nothing if the most unimaginable particle only be absent. The fine arts, poetry, painting, sculpture, music, and architecture, as thought, or idea, Athene-like, are complete, finished, revelations of wisdom at once. Not so the mechanical arts and sciences: they are arts of growth; they are shaped and formed gradually, (and that, more by a blind sort of guessing than by intuition,) and take many men's lives to win even to one true principle. On all sides they are the exact opposites of each other; for, in the former, the principles from the first are mature, and only the manipulation immature; in the latter, it is the principles that are almost always immature, and the manipulation as constantly mature. The fine arts are always grounded upon truth; the mechanical arts and sciences almost always upon hypothesis; the first are unconfined, infinite, immaterial, impossible

of reduction into formulas, or of conversion into machines; the last are limited, finite, material, can be uttered through formulas, worked by arithmetic, tabulated and seen in machines.

SOPHON. Kosmon, you see that Kalon, true to his nature, prefers the beautiful and good, to the good without the beautiful; and you, who love nature, and regard all that she, and what man from her, can produce, with equal delight,—true to your's,—cannot perceive wherefore he limits genius to the fine arts. Let me show you why Kalon's ideas are truer than yours. You say that chemistry, steam-power, and the electric telegraph, are more radically civilizers than poetry, painting, or music: but bethink you: what emotions beyond the common and selfish ones of wonder and fear do the mechanical arts or sciences excite, or communicate? what pity, or love, or other holy and unselfish desires and aspirations, do they elicit? Inert of themselves in all teachable things, they are the agents only whereby teachable things,—the charities, sympathies and love,—may be more swiftly and more certainly conveyed and diffused: and beyond diffusing media the mechanical arts or sciences cannot get; for they are merely simple facts; nothing more: they cannot induct; for they, in or of themselves, have no inductive powers, and their office is confined to that of carrying and spreading abroad the powers which do induct; which powers make a full, complete, and visible existence only in the fine arts. In FACT and THOUGHT we have the whole question of superiority decided. Fact is merely physical record: Thought is the application of that record to something *human*. Without application, the fact is only fact, and nothing more; the application, thought, then, certainly must be superior to the record, fact. Also in thought man gets the clearest glimpse he will ever have of soul, and sees the incorporeal make the nearest approach to the corporeal that it is possible for it to do here upon earth. And hence, these noble acts of wisdom are—far—far above the mechanical arts and sciences, and are properly called fine arts, because their high and peculiar office is to refine.

KOSMON. But, certainly thought is as much exercised in deducting from physical facts the sciences and mechanical arts as ever it is in poetry, painting, or music. The act of inventing print, or of applying steam, is quite as soul-like as the inventing of a picture, poem, or statue.

KALON. Quite. The chemist, poet, engineer, or painter, alike, think. But the things upon which they exercise their several faculties are very widely unlike each other; the chemist or engineer cogitates only the physical; the poet or painter joins to the physical the human, and investigates soul—scans the world in man added to the world

without him—takes in universal creation, its sights, sounds, aspects, and ideas. Sophon says that the fine arts are thoughts; but I think I know a more comprehensive word; for they are something more than thoughts; they are things also; that word is NATURE—Nature fully—thorough nature—the world of creation. All that is *in* man, his mysteries of soul, his thoughts and emotions—deep, wise, holy, loving, touching, and fearful,—or in the world, beautiful, vast, ponderous, gloomy, and awful, moved with rhythmic harmonious utterance—*that* is Poetry. All that is *of* man—his triumphs, glory, power, and passions; or of the world—its sunshine and clouds, its plains, hills, or valleys, its wind-swept mountains and snowy Alps, river and ocean—silent, lonely, severe, and sublime—mocked with living colours, hue and tone,—*that* is Painting. Man—heroic man, his acts, emotions, loves,—aspirative, tender, deep, and calm,—intensified, purified, colourless,—exhibited peculiarly and directly through his own form; *that* is sculpture. All the voices of nature—of man—his bursts of rage, pity, and fear—his cries of joy—his sighs of love; of the winds and the waters—tumultuous, hurrying, surging, tremulous, or gently falling—married to melodious numbers; *that* is music. And, the music of proportions—of nature and man, and the harmony and opposition of light and shadow, set forth in the ponderous; *that* is Architecture.

CHRISTIAN. [*as he enters*] Forbear, Kalon! These I know for your dear friends, Kosmon and Sophon. The moment of discoursing with them has at last arrived: May I profit by it! Kalon, fearful of checking your current of thought, I stood without, and heard that which you said: and, though I agree with you in all your definitions of poetry, painting, sculpture, music, and architecture; yet certainly all things in or of man, or the world, are not, however equally beautiful, equally worthy of being used by the artist. Fine art absolutely rejects all impurities of form; not less absolutely does it reject all impurities of passion and expression. Everything throughout a poem, picture, or statue, or in music, may be sensuously beautiful; but nothing must be sensually so. Sins are only paid for in virtues; thus, every sin found is a virtue lost—lost—not only to the artist, but a cause of loss to others—to all who look upon what he does. He should deem his art a sacred treasure, intrusted to him for the common good; and over it he should build, of the most precious materials, in the simplest, chastest, and truest proportions, a temple fit for universal worship: instead of which, it is too often the case that he raises above it an edifice of clay; which, as mortal as his life, falls, burying both it and himself under a heap of dirt. To preserve him from this corruption of his art, let him erect for

his guidance a standard awfully high above himself. Let him think of Christ; and what he would not show to as pure a nature as His, let him never be seduced to work on, or expose to the world.

KOSMON. Oh, Kalon, whither do we go! Greek art is condemned, and Satire hath got its death-stroke. The beautiful is not the beautiful unless it is fettered to the moral; and Virtue rejects the physical perfections, lest she should fall in love with herself, and sin and cause sin.

CHRISTIAN. Nay, Kosmon. Nothing pure,—nothing that is innocent, chaste, unsensual,—whether Greek or satirical, is condemned: but everything—every picture, poem, statue, or piece of music—which elicits the sensual, viceful, and unholy desires of our nature—is, and that utterly. The beautiful was created the true, morally as well as physically; vice is a deformment of virtue,—not of form, to which it is a parasitical addition—an accretion which can and must be excised before the beautiful can show itself as it was originally made, morally as well as formally perfect. How we all wish the sensual, indecent, and brutal, away from Hogarth, so that we might show him to the purest virgin without fear or blushing.

SOPHON. And as well from Shakspere. Rotten members, though small in themselves, are yet large enough to taint the whole body. And those impurities, like rank growths of vine, may be lopped away without injuring any vital principle. In perfect art the utmost purity of intention, design, and execution, alone is wisdom. Every tree—every flower, in defiance of adverse contingencies, grows with perfect will to be perfect: and, shall man, who hath what they have not, a soul wherewith he may defy all ill, do less?

KOSMON. But how may this purity be attained? I see everywhere close round the pricks; not a single step may be taken in advance without wounding something vital. Corruption strews thick both earth and ocean; it is only the heavens that are pure, and man cannot live upon manna alone.

CHRISTIAN. Kosmon, you would seem to mistake what Sophon and I mean. Neither he nor I wish nature to be used less, or otherwise than as it appears; on the contrary, we wish it used more—more directly. Nature itself is comparatively pure; all that we desire is the removal of the factitious matter that the vice of fashion, evil hearts, and infamous desires, graft upon it. It is not simple innocent nature that we would exile, but the devilish and libidinous corruptions that sully nature.

KALON. But, if your ideas were strictly carried out, there would be but little of worth left in the world for the artist to use; for, if

I understand you rightly, you object to his making use of any passion, whether heroic, patriotic, or loving, that is not rigidly virtuous.

CHRISTIAN. I do. Without he has a didactic aim; like as Hogarth had. A picture, poem, or statue, unless it speaks some purpose, is mere paint, paper, or stone. A work of art must have a purpose, or it is not a work of *fine* art: thus, then, if it be a work of fine art, it has a purpose; and, having purpose, it has either a good or an evil one: there is no alternative. An artist's works are his children, his immortal heirs, to his evil as well as to his good; as he hath trained them, so will they teach. Let him ask himself why does a parent so tenderly rear his children. Is it not because he knows that evil is evil, whether it take the shape of angels or devils? And is not the parent's example worthy of the artist's imitation? What advantage has a man over a child? Is there any preservative peculiar to manhood that it alone may see and touch sin, and yet be not defiled? Verily, there is none! All mere battles, assassinations, immolations, horrible deaths, and terrible situations used by the artist solely to excite,—every passion degrading to man's perfect nature,—should certainly be rejected, and that unhesitatingly.

SOPHON.—Suffer me to extend the just conclusions of Christian. Art—true art—fine art—cannot be either coarse or low. Innocent-like, no taint will cling to it, and a smock frock is as pure as "virginal-chaste robes." And,—sensualism, indecency, and brutality, excepted—sin is not sin, if not in the act; and, in satire, with the same exceptions, even sin in the act is tolerated when used to point forcibly a moral crime, or to warn society of a crying shame which it can remedy.

KALON. But, my dear Sophon,—and you, Christian,—you do not condemn the oak because of its apples; and, like them, the sin in the poem, picture, or statue, may be a wormy accretion grafted from without. The spectator often makes sin where the artist intended none. For instance, in the nude,—where perhaps, the poet, painter, or sculptor, imagines he has embodied only the purest and chastest ideas and forms, the sensualist sees—what he wills to see; and, serpent-like, previous to devouring his prey, he covers it with his saliva.

CHRISTIAN. The Circean poison, whether drunk from the clearest crystal or the coarsest clay, alike intoxicates and makes beasts of men. Be assured that every nude figure or nudity introduced in a poem, picture, or piece of sculpture, merely on physical grounds, and only for effect, is vicious. And, where it is boldly introduced and forms the central idea, it ought never to have a sense

of its condition: it is not nudity that is sinful, but the figure's knowledge of its nudity, (too surely communicated by it to the spectator,) that makes it so. Eve and Adam before their fall were not more utterly shameless than the artist ought to make his inventions. The Turk believes that, at the judgment-day, every artist will be compelled to furnish, from his own soul, soul for every one of his creations. This thought is a noble one, and should thoroughly awake poet, painter, and sculptor, to the awful responsibilities they labour under. With regard to the sensualist,—who is omnivorous, and swine-like, assimilates indifferently pure and impure, degrading everything he hears or sees,—little can be said beyond this; that for him, if the artist *be* without sin, he is not answerable. But in this responsibility he has two rigid yet just judges, God and himself;—let him answer there before that tribunal. God will acquit or condemn him only as he can acquit or condemn himself.

Kalon. But, under any circumstance, beautiful nude flesh beautifully painted must kindle sensuality; and, described as beautifully in poetry, it will do the like, almost, if not quite, as readily. Sculpture is the only form of art in which it can be used thoroughly pure, chaste, unsullied, and unsullying. I feel, Christian, that you mean this. And see what you do!—What a vast domain of art you set a Solomon's seal upon! how numberless are the poems, pictures, and statues—the most beautiful productions of their authors—you put in limbo! To me, I confess, it appears the very top of prudery to condemn these lovely creations, merely because they quicken some men's pulses.

Kosmon. And, to me, it appears hypercriticism to object to pictures, poems, and statues, calling them not works of art—or fine art—because they have no higher purpose than eye or ear-delight. If this law be held to be good, very few pictures called of the English school—of the English school, did I say?—very few pictures at all, of any school, are safe from condemnation: almost all the Dutch must suffer judgment, and a very large proportion of modern sculpture, poetry, and music, will not pass. Even "Christabel" and the "Eve of St. Agnes" could not stand the ordeal.

Christian. Oh, Kalon, you hardly need an answer! What! shall the artist spend weeks and months, nay, sometimes years, in thought and study, contriving and perfecting some beautiful invention,—in order only that men's pulses may be quickened? What!—can he, jesuit-like, dwell in the house of soul, only to discover where to sap her foundations?—Satan-like, does he turn his angel of light into a fiend of darkness, and use his God-delegated might against its giver, making Astartes and Molochs to draw other thou-

sands of innocent lives into the embrace of sin? And as for you, Kosmon, I regard purpose as I regard soul; one is not more the light of the thought than the other is the light of the body; and both, soul and purpose, are necessary for a complete intellect; and intellect, of the intellectual—of which the fine arts are the capital members—is not more to be expected than demanded. I believe that most of the pictures you mean are mere natural history paintings from the animal side of man. The Dutchmen may, certainly, go Letheward; but for their colour, and subtleties of execution, they would not be tolerated by any man of taste.

Sophon. Christian here, I think, is too stringent. Though walls be necessary round our flower gardens to keep out swine and other vile cattle,—yet I can see no reason why, with excluding beasts, we should also exclude light and air. Purpose is purpose or not, according to the individual capacity to assimilate it. Different plants require different soils, and they will rather die than grow on unfriendly ones; it is the same with animals; they endure existence only through their natural food; and this variety of soils, plants, and vegetables, is the world less man. But man, as well as the other created forms, is subject to the same law; he takes only that aliment he can digest. It is sufficient with some men that their sensoria be delighted with pleasurable and animated grouping, colour, light, and shade: this feeling or desire of their's is, in itself, thoroughly innocent: it is true, it is not a great burden for them to carry; no, but it is the lightness of the burden that is the merit; for thereby, their step is quickened and not clogged, their intellect is exhilarated and not oppressed. Thus, then, a purpose *is* secured, from a picture or poem or statue, which may not have in it the smallest particle of what Christian and I think necessary for it to possess; he reckons a poem, picture, or statue, to be a work of fine art by the quality and quantity of thought it contains, by the mental leverage it possesses wherewith to move his mind, by the honey which he may hive, and by the heavenly manna he may gather therefrom.

Kosmon. Christian wants art like Magdalen Hospitals, where the windows are so contrived that all of earth is excluded, and only heaven is seen. Wisdom is not only shown in the soul, but also in the body: the bones, nerves, and muscles, are quite as wonderful in idea as is the incorporeal essence which rules them. And the animal part of man wants as much caring for as the spiritual: God made both, and is equally praised through each. And men's souls are as much touchable and teachable through their animal feelings as ever they are through their mental aspirations; this both Orpheus and Amphion knew when they, with their music, made towns to rise in

savage woods by savage hands. And hence, in that light, nothing is without a purpose; and I maintain,—if they give but the least glimpse of happiness to a single human being,—that even the Dutch masters are useful, I believe that the thought-wrapped philosopher, who, in his close-pent study, designs some valuable blessing for his lower and more animal brethren, only pursues the craving of his nature; and that his happiness is no higher than their's in their several occupations and delights. Sight and sense are fully as powerful for happiness as thought and ratiocination. Nature grows flowers wherever she can; she causes sweet waters to ripple over stony beds, and living wells to spring up in deserts, so that grass and herbs may grow and afford nourishment to *some* of God's creatures. Even the granite and the lava must put forth blossoms.

Kalon. Oh Christian, children cannot digest strong meats! Neither can a blind man be made to see by placing him opposite the sun. The sound of the violin is as innocent as that of the organ. And, though there be a wide difference in the sacredness of the occupations, yet dance, song, and the other amusements common to society, are quite as necessary to a healthy condition of the mind and body, as is to the soul the pursuit and daily practice of religion. The healthy condition of the mind and body is, after all, the happy life; and whether that life be most mental or most animal it matters little, even before God, so long as its delights, amusements, and occupations, be thoroughly innocent and chaste.

Christian. So long as the pursuits, pastimes, and pleasures of mankind be innocent and chaste,—with you all, heartily, I believe it matters little how or in what form they be enjoyed. Pure water is certainly equally pure, whether it trickle from the hill-side or flow through crystal conduits; and equally refreshing whether drunk from the iron bowl or the golden goblet;—only the crystal and gold will better please some natures than the hill-side and the iron. I know also that a star may give more light than the moon,—but that is up in its own heavens and not here on earth. I know that it is not light and shade which make a complete globe, but, as well, the local and neutral tints. Thus, my friends, you perceive that I am neither for building a wall, nor for contriving windows so as to exclude light, air, and earth. As much as any of you, I am for every man's sitting under his own vine, and for his training, pruning, and eating its fruit how he pleases. Let the artist paint, write, or carve, what and how he wills, teach the world through sense or through thought,—I will not dissent; I have no patent to entitle me to do so; nay, I will be thoroughly satisfied with whatsoever he does, so long as it is pure, unsensual, and earnestly true. But, as the mental

is the peculiar feature that places man apart from and above animals, —so ought all that he does to be apart from and above their nature; especially in the fine arts, which are the intellectual perfection of the intellectual. And nothing short of this intellectual perfection,—however much they may be pictures, poems, statues, or music,—can rank such works to be works of Fine Art. They may have merit—nay, be useful, and hence, in some sort, have a purpose: but they are as much works of Fine Art as Babel was the Temple of Solomon.

Sophon. And man can be made to understand these truths—can be drawn to crave for and love the fine arts: it is only to take him in hand as we would take some animal—tenderly using it—entreating it, as it were, to do its best—to put forth all its powers with all its capable force and beauty. Nor is it so very difficult a task to raise, in the low, conceptions of things high: the mass of men have a fine appreciation of God and his goodness: and as active, charitable, and sympathetic a nurture in the beautiful and true as they have given to them in religion, would as surely and swiftly raise in them an equally high appreciation of the fine arts. But, if the artist would essay such a labour, he must show them what fine art is: and, in order to do this effectually, as an architect clears away from some sacred edifice which he restores the shambles and shops, which, like filthy toads cowering on a precious monument, have squatted themselves round its noble proportions; so must he remove from his art-edifice the deformities which hide—the corruptions which shame it.

Christian. How truly Sophon speaks a retrospective look will show. The disfigurements which both he and I deplore are strictly what he compared them to; they are shambles and shops grafted on a sacred edifice. Still, indigenous art is sacred and devoted to religious purposes: this keeps it pure for a time; but, like a stream travelling and gathering other streams as it goes through wide stretches of country to the sea, it receives greater and more numerous impurities the farther it gets from its source, until, at last, what was, in its rise, a gentle rilling through snows and over whitest stones, roars into the ocean a muddy and contentious river. Men soon long to touch and taste all that they see; savage-like, him whom to-day they deem a god and worship, they on the morrow get an appetite for and kill, to eat and barter. And thus art is degraded, made a thing of carnal desire—a commodity of the exchange. Yes, Sophon, to be instructive, to become a teaching instrument, the art-edifice must be cleansed from its abominations; and, with them, must the artist sweep out the improvements and ruthless restorations that hang on it like formless botches on peopled tapestry. The

multitude must be brought to stand face to face with the pious and earnest builders, to enjoy the severely simple, beautiful, aspiring, and solemn temple, in all its first purity, the same as they bequeathed it to them as their posterity.

KALON. The peasant, upon acquaintance, quickly prefers wheaten bread to the black and sour mass that formerly served him: and when true jewels are placed before him, counterfeit ones in his eyes soon lose their lustre, and become things which he scorns. The multitude are teachable—teachable as a child; but, like a child, they are self-willed and obstinate, and will learn in their own way, or not at all. And, if the artist wishes to raise them unto a fit audience, he must consult their very waywardness, or his work will be a Penelope's web of done and undone: he must be to them not only cords of support staying their every weakness against sin and temptation, but also, tendrils of delight winding around them. But I cannot understand why regeneration can flow to them through sacred art alone. All pure art is sacred art. And the artist having soul as well as nature—the lodestar as well as the lodestone—to steer his path by—and seeing that he must circle earth—it matters little from what quarter he first points his course; all that is necessary is that he go as direct as possible, his knowledge keeping him from quicksands and sunken rocks.

CHRISTIAN. Yes, Kalon;—and, to compare things humble—though conceived in the same spirit of love—with things mighty, the artist, if he desires to inform the people thoroughly, must imitate Christ, and, like him, stoop down to earth and become flesh of their flesh; and his work should be wrought out with all his soul and strength in the same world-broad charity, and truth, and virtue, and be, for himself as well as for them, a justification for his teaching. But all art, simply because it is pure and perfect, cannot, for those grounds alone, be called sacred: Christian, it may, and that justly; for only since Christ taught have morals been considered a religion. Christian and sacred art bear that relation to each other that the circle bears to its generating point; the first is only volume, the last is power: and though the first—as the world includes God—includes with it the last, still, the last is the greatest, for it makes that which includes it: thus all pure art is Christian, but not all is sacred. Christian art comprises the earth and its humanities, and, by implication, God and Christ also; and sacred art is the emanating idea—the central causating power—the jasper throne, whereon sits Christ, surrounded by the prophets, apostles, and saints, administering judgment, wisdom, and holiness. In this sense, then, the art you would call sacred is not sacred, but Christian: and, as *all perfect art*

is Christian, regeneration necessarily can only flow thence; and thus it is, as you say, that, from whatever quarter the artist steers his course, he steers aright.

Kosmon. And, Christian, is a return to this sacred or Christian art by you deemed possible? I question it. How can you get the art of one age to reflect that of another, when the image to be reflected is without the angle of reflection? The sun cannot be seen of us when it is night! and that class of art has got its golden age too remote—its night too long set—for it to hope ever to grasp rule again, or again to see its day break upon it. You have likened art to a river rising pure, and rolling a turbid volume into the ocean. I have a comparison equally just. The career of one artist contains in itself the whole of art-history; its every phase is presented by him in the course of his life. Savage art is beheld in his childish scratchings and barbarous glimmerings; Indian, Egyptian, and Assyrian art in his boyish rigidity and crude fixedness of idea and purpose; Mediæval, or pre-Raffaelle art is seen in his youthful timid darings, his unripe fancies oscillating between earth and heaven; there where we expect truth, we see conceit; there where we want little, much is given—now a blank eyed riddle,—dark with excess of self,—now a giant thought—vast but repulsive,—and now angel visitors startling us with wisdom and touches of heavenly beauty. Every where is seen exactness; but it is the exactness of hesitation, and not of knowledge—the line of doubt, and not of power: all the promises for ripeness are there; but, as yet, all are immature. And mature art is presented when all these rude scaffoldings are thrown down—when the man steps out of the chrysalis a complete idea—both Pysche and Eros—free-thoughted, free-tongued, and free-handed;—a being whose soul moves through the heavens and the earth—now choiring it with angels—and now enthroning it, bay-crowned, among the men-kings;—whose hand passes over all earth, spreading forth its beauties unerring as the seasons—stretches through cloudland, revealing its delectable glories, or, eagle-like, soars right up against the sun;—or seaward goes seizing the cresting foam as it leaps—the ships and their crews as they wallow in the watery valleys, or climb their steeps, or hang over their flying ridges:—daring and doing all whatsoever it shall dare to do, with boundless fruitfulness of idea, and power, and line; that is mature art—art of the time of Phidias, of Raffaelle, and of Shakspere. And, Christian, in preferring the art of the period previous to Raffaelle to the art of his time, you set up the worse for the better, elevate youth above manhood, and tell us that the half-formed and unripe berry is wholesomer than the perfect and ripened fruit.

CHRISTIAN. Kosmon, your thoughts seduce you; or rather, your nature prefers the full and rich to the exact and simple: you do not go deep enough—do not penetrate beneath the image's gilt overlay, and see that it covers only worm-devoured wood. Your very comparison tells against you. What you call ripeness, others, with as much truth, may call over-ripeness, nay, even rottenness; when all the juices are drunk with their lusciousness, sick with over-sweetness. And the art which you call youthful and immature—may be, most likely is, mature and wholesome in the same degree that it is tasteful, a perfect round of beautiful, pure, and good. You call youth immature; but in what does it come short of manhood. Has it not all that man can have,—free, happy, noble, and spiritual thoughts? And are not those thoughts newer, purer, and more unselfish in the youth than in the man? What eye has the man, that the youth's is not as comprehensive, keen, rapid, and penetrating? or what hand, that the youth's is not as swift, forceful, cunning, and true? And what does the youth gain in becoming man? Is it freshness, or deepness, or power, or wisdom? nay rather—is it not languor—the languor of satiety—of indifferentism? And thus soul-rusted and earth-charmed, what mate is he for his former youth? Drunken with the world-lees, what can he do but pourtray nature drunken as well, and consumed with the same fever or stupor that consumes himself, making up with gilding and filagree what he lacks in truth and sincerity? and what comparison shall exist here and between what his youth might or could have done, with a soul innocent and untroubled as heaven's deep calm of blue, gazing on earth with seraph eyes—looking, but not longing—or, in the spirit rapt away before the emerald-like rainbow-crowned throne, witnessing "things that shall be hereafter," and drawing them down almost as stainless as he beheld them? What an array of deep, earnest, and noble thinkers, like angels armed with a brightness that withers, stand between Giotto and Raffaelle; to mention only Orcagna, Ghiberti, Masaccio, Lippi, Fra Beato Angelico, and Francia. Parallel *them* with post-Raffaelle artists? If you think you can, you have dared a labour of which the fruit shall be to you as Dead Sea apples, golden and sweet to the eye, but, in the mouth, ashes and bitterness. And the Phidian era was a youthful one—the highest and purest period of Hellenic art: after that time they added no more gods or heroes, but took for models instead—the Alcibiadeses and Phyrnes, and made Bacchuses and Aphrodites; not as Phidias would have—clothed with the greatness of thought, or girded with valour, or veiled with modesty; but dissolved with the voluptuousness of the bath, naked, wanton, and shameless.

Sophon. You hear, Kosmon, that Christian prefers ripe youth to ripe manhood: and he is right. Early summer is nobler than early autumn; the head is wiser than the hand. You take the hand to mean too much: you should not judge by quantity, or luxuriance, or dexterity, but by quality, chastity, and fidelity. And colour and tone are only a fair setting to thought and virtue. Perhaps it is the fate, or rather the duty, of mortals to make a sacrifice for all things, withheld as well as given. Hand sometimes succumbs to head, and head in its turn succumbs to hand; the first is the lot of youth, the last of manhood. The question is—which of the two we can best afford to do without. Narrowed down to this, I think but very few men would be found who would not sacrifice in the loss of hand in preference to its gain at the loss of head.

Kosmon. But, Christian, in advocating a return to this pre-Raffaelle art, are you not—you yourself—urging the committal of "ruthless restorations" and "improvements," new and vile as any that you have denounced? You tell the artist, that he should restore the sacred edifice to its first purity—the same as it was bequeathed by its pious and earnest builders. But can he do this and be himself original? For myself, I would above all things urge him to study how to *reproduce*, and not how to represent—to imitate no past perfection, but to create for himself another, as beautiful, wise, and true. I would say to him, "build not on old ground, profaned, polluted, trod into slough by filthy animals; but break new ground—virgin ground—ground that thought has never imagined or eye seen, and dig into our hearts a foundation, deep and broad as our humanity. Let it not be a temple formed of hands only, but built up of *us*—us of the present—body of our body, soul of our soul."

Christian. When men wish to raise a piece of stone, or to move it along, they seek for a fulcrum to use their lever from; and, this obtained, they can place the stone wheresoever they please. And world-perfections come into existence too slowly for men to reject all the teaching and experience of their predecessors: the labour of learning is trifling compared to the labour of finding out; the first implies only days, the last, hundreds of years. The discovery of the new world without the compass would have been sheer chance; but with it, it became an absolute certainty. So, and in such manner, the modern artist seeks to use early mediæval art, as a fulcrum to raise through, but only as a fulcrum; for he himself holds the lever, whereby he shall both guide and fix the stones of his art temple; as experience, which shall be to him a

rudder directing the motion of his ship, but in subordination to his control; and as a compass, which shall regulate his journey, but which, so far from taking away his liberty, shall even add to it, because through it his course is set so fast in the ways of truth as to allow him, undividedly, to give up his whole soul to the purpose of his voyage, and to steer a wider and freer path over the trackless, but to him, with his rudder and compass, no longer the trackless or waste ocean; for, God and his endeavours prospering him, that shall yield up unto his hands discoveries as man-worthy as any hitherto beheld by men, or conceived by poets.

KALON. But, Christian, another artist with equal justness might use Hellenic art as a means toward making happy discoveries; formatively, there is nothing in it that is not both beautiful and perfect; and beautiful things, rainbow-like, are once and for ever beautiful; and the contemplation and study of its dignified, graceful, and truthful embodiments—which, by common consent, it only is allowed to possess in an eminent and universal degree—is full as likely to awaken in the mind of its student as high revelations of wisdom, and cause him to bear to earth as many perfections for man, as ever the study of pre-Raffaelle art can reveal or give, through its votary.

CHRISTIAN. But beautiful things, to be beautiful in the highest degree, like the rainbow, must have a spiritual as well as a physical voice. Lovely as it is, it is not the arch of colours that glows in the heavens of our hearts; what does, is the inner and invisible sense for which it was set up of old by God, and of which its many-hued form is only the outward and visible sign. Thus, beautiful things alone, of themselves, are not sufficient for this task; to be sufficient they must be as vital with soul as they are with shape. To be formatively perfect is not enough; they must also be spiritually perfect, and this not *locally* but universally. The art of the Greeks was a local art; and hence, now, it has no spiritual. Their gods speak to us no longer as gods, or teach us divinely: they have become mere images of stone—profane embodiments. False to our spiritual, Hellenic art wants every thing that Christian art is full of. Sacred and universal, this clasps us, as Abraham's bosom did Lazarus, within its infinite embraces, causing every fibre of our being to quicken under its heavenly truths. Ithuriel's golden spear was not more antagonistic to Satan's loathly transformation—than is Christian opposed to pagan art. The wide, the awful gulf, separating one from the other, will be felt instantly in its true force by first thinking ZEUS, and then thinking CHRIST. How pale, shadowy, and shapeless the vision of lust,

revenge, and impotence, that rises at the thought of Zeus; but at the thought of Christ, how overwhelming the inrush of sublime and touching realities; what height and depth of love and power; what humility, and beauty, and immaculate purity are made ours at the mention of his name; the Saviour, the Intercessor, the Judge, the Resurrection and the Life. These—these are the divinely awful truths taught by our faith; and which should also be taught by our art. Hellenic art, like the fig tree that only bore leaves, withered at Christ's coming; and thus no "happy discoveries" can flow thence, or "revelations of wisdom," or other perfections be borne to earth for man.

Sophon. Christian thinks and says, that if the spiritual be not *in* a thing, it cannot be put upon it; and hence, if a work of art be not a god, it must be a man, or a mere image of one; and that the faith of the Pagan is the foolishness of the Christian. Nor does he utter unreason; for, notwithstanding their perfect forms, their gods are not gods to us, but only perfect forms: Apollo, Theseus, the Ilissus, Aphrodite, Artemis, Psyche, and Eros, are only shapeful manhood, womanhood, virginhood, and youth, and move us only by the exact amount of humanity they possess in common with ourselves. *Homer, and Æschylus, and Sophocles, and Phidias, live not by the sacred in them, but by the human:* and, but for this common bond, Hellenic art would have been submerged in the same Lethe that has drowned the Indian, Egyptian, and Assyrian Theogonies and arts. And, if we except form, what other thing does Hellenic art offer to the modern artist, that is not thoroughly opposed to his faith, wants, and practice? And thought—thought in accordance with all the lines of his knowledge, temperament, and habits—thought through which he makes and shapes for men, and is understood by them—it is as destitute of, as inorganic matter of soul and reason. But Christian art, because of the faith upon which it is built, suffers under no such drawbacks, for that faith is as personal and vigorous now as ever it was at its origin—every motion and principle of our being moves to it like a singing harmony;—it is the breath which brings out of us, Æolian-harp-like, our most penetrating and heavenly music—the river of the water of life, which searches all our dry parts and nourishes them, causing them to spring up and bear abundantly the happy seed which shall enrich and make fat the earth to the uttermost parts thereof.

Kalon. With you both I believe, that faith is necessary to a man, and that without faith sight even is feeble: but I also believe that a man is as much a part of the religious, moral, and social system in which he lives, as is a plant of the soil, situation, and

climate in which it exists: and that external applications have just as much power to change the belief of the man, as they have to alter the structure of the plant. A faith once in a man, it is there always; and, though unfelt even by himself, works actively: and Hellenic art, so far from being an impediment to the Christian belief, is the exact reverse; for, it is the privilege of that belief, through its sublime alchymy, to be able to transmute all it touches into itself: and the perfect forms of Hellenic art, so touched, move our souls only the more energetically upwards, because of their transcendent beauty; for through them alone can we see how wonderfully and divinely God wrought—how majestic, powerful, and vigorous he made man—how lovely, soft, and winning, he made woman: and in beholding these things, we are thankful to him that we are permitted to see them—not as Pagans, but altogether as Christians. Whether Christian or Pagan, the highest beauty is still the highest beauty; and the highest beauty alone, to the total exclusion of gods and their myths, compels our admiration.

Kosmon. Another thing we ought to remember, when judging Hellenic Art, is, but for its existence, all other kinds—pre-Raffaelle as well—could not have had being. The Greeks were, by far, more inclined to worship nature as contained in themselves, than the gods—if the gods are not reflexes of themselves, which is most likely. And, thus impelled, they broke through the monstrous symbolism of Egypt, and made them gods after their own hearts; that is, fashioned them out of themselves. And herein, I think we may discern something of providence; for, suppose their natures had not been so powerfully antagonistic to the traditions and conventions of their religion, what other people in the world could or would have done their work? Cast about a brief while in your memories, and endeavour to find whether there has ever existed a people who in their nature, nationality, and religion, have been so eminently fitted to perform such a task as the Hellenic? You will then feel that we have reason to be thankful that they were allowed to do what else had never been done; and, which not done, all posterity would have suffered to the last throe of time. And, if they have not made a thorough perfection—a spiritual as well as a physical one—forget not that, at least, they have made this physical representation a finished one. They took it from the Egyptians, rude, clumsy, and seated; its head stony—pinned to its chest; its hands tied to its side, and its legs joined; they shaped it, beautiful, majestic, and erect; elevated its head; breathed into it animal fire; gave movement and action to its arms and hands; opened its legs and made it walk—made it human at all points—the radical

impersonation of physical and sensuous beauty. And, if the god has receded into the past and become a "pale, shadowy, and shapeless vision of lust, revenge, and impotence," the human lives on graceful, vigorous, and deathless, as at first, and excites in us admiration as unbounded as ever followed it of old in Greece or Italy.

CHRISTIAN. Yes, Kosmon, yes! they are flourished all over with the rhetoric of the body; but nowhere is to be seen in them that diviner poetry, the oratory of the soul! Truly they are a splendid casket enclosing nothing—at least nothing now of importance to us; for what they once contained, the world, when stirred with nobler matter, disregarded, and left to perish. But, Kosmon, we cannot discuss probabilities. Our question is—not whether the Greeks only could have made such masterpieces of nature and art; but whether their works are of that kind the *most fitted* to carry forward to a more ultimate perfection that idea which is peculiarly our's. All art, more or less, is a species of symbolism; and the Hellenic, notwithstanding its more universal method of typification, was fully as symbolic as the Egyptian; and hence its language is not only dead, but forgotten, and is now past recovery: and, if it were not, what purpose would be served by its republication? For, for whom does the artist work? The inevitable answer is, "For his nation!" His statue, or picture, poem, or music, must be made up and out of them; they are at once his exemplars, his audience, and his worshippers; and he is their mirror in which they behold themselves as they are: he breathes them vitally as an atmosphere, and they breathe him. Zeus, Athene, Heracles, Prometheus, Agamemnon, Orestes, the House of Œdipus, Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, and Antigone, spoke something to the Hellenic nations; woke their piety, pity, or horror,—thrilled, soothed, or delighted them; but they have no charm for our ears; for us, they are literally disembodied ghosts, and voiceless as shapeless. But not so are Christ, and the holy Apostles and saints, and the Blessed Virgin; and not so is Hamlet, or Richard the Third, or Macbeth, or Shylock, or the House of Lear, Ophelia, Desdemona, Grisildis, or Una, or Genevieve. No: *they* all speak and move real and palpable before our eyes, and are felt deep down in the heart's core of every thinking soul among us:—they all grapple to us with holds that only life will loose. Of all this I feel assured, because, a brief while since, we agreed together that man could only be raised through an incarnation of himself. Tacitly, we would also seem to have limited the uses of Hellenic art to the serving as models of proportion, or as a gradus for form: and, though I cannot deny them any merit they may have in this respect, still, I would wish to deal cautiously with them: the artist,—most

especially the young one, and who is and would be most subject to them and open to their influence,—should never have his soul asleep when his hand is awake; but, like voice and instrument, one should always accompany the other harmoniously.

KOSMON. But surely you will deal no less cautiously with early mediæval art. Archaisms are not more tolerable in pictures than they are in statues, poems, or music; and the archaisms of this kind of art are so numerous as to be at first sight the most striking feature belonging to it. Most remarkable among these unnatural peculiarities are gilded backgrounds, gilded hair, gilded ornaments and borders to draperies and dresses, the latter's excessive verticalism of lines and tedious involution of folds, and the childlike passivity of countenance and expression: all of which are very prominent, and operate as serious drawbacks to their merits; which—as I have freely admitted—are in truth not a few, nor mean.

CHRISTIAN. The artist is only a man, and living with other men in a state of being called society; and,—though perhaps in a lesser degree—he is as subject to its influences—its fashions and customs —as they are. But in this respect his failings may be likened to the dross which the purest metal in its molten state continually throws up to its surface, but which is mere excrement, and so little essential that it can be skimmed away: and, as the dross to the metal, just so little essential are the archaisms you speak of to the early art, and just so easily can they be cast aside. But bethink you, Kosmon. Is Hellenic art without archaisms? And that feature of it held to be its crowning perfection—its head—is not that a very marked one? And, is it not so completely opposed to the artist's experience in the forms of nature that—except in subjects from Greek history and mythology—he dares not use it—at least without modifying it so as to destroy its Hellenism?

SOPHON. Then Hellenic Art is like a musical bell with a flaw in it; before it can be serviceable it must be broken up and recast. If its sum of beauty—its line of lines, the facial angle, must be destroyed—as it undoubtedly must—before it can be used for the general purposes of art, then its claims over early mediæval art, in respect of form, are small indeed. But is it not altogether a great archaism?

KALON. Oh, Sophon! weighty as are the reasons urged against Hellenic art by Christian and yourself, they are not weighty enough to outbalance its beauty, at least to me: at present they may have set its sun in gloom; yet I know that that obscuration, like a dark foreground to a bright distance, will make its rising again only the more surpassingly glorious. I admire its exquisite creations, because

they are beautiful, and noble, and perfect, and they elevate me because I think them so; and their silent capabilities, like the star-dust of heaven before the intellectual insight, resolve themselves into new worlds of thoughts and things so ever as I contemplate their perfections: like a prolonged music, full of sweet yet melancholy cadences, they have sunk into my heart—my brain—my soul—never, never to cease while life shall hold with me. But, for all that, my hands are not full; and, whithersoever the happy seed shall require me, I am not for withholding plough or spade, planting or watering; and that which I am called in the spirit to do—will I do manfully and with my whole strength.

Sophon. Kalon, the conclusion of your speech is better than the commencement. It is better to sacrifice myrrh and frankincense than virtue and wisdom, thoughts than deeds. Would that all men were as ready as yourself to dispark their little selfish enclosures, and burn out all their hedges of prickly briers and brambles—turning the evil into the good—the seed-catching into the seed-nourishing. Of the too consumptions let us prefer the active, benevolent, and purifying one of fire, to the passive, self-eating, and corrupting one of rust: one half minute's clear shining may touch some watching and waiting soul, and through him kindle whole ages of light.

Christian. Men do not stumble over what they know; and the day fades so imperceptibly into night that were it not for experience, darkness would surprise us long before we believed the day done: and, in relation to art, its revolutions are still more imperceptible in their gradations; and, in fulfilling themselves, they spread over such an extent of time, that in their knowledge the experience of one artist is next to nothing; and its twilight is so lengthy, that those who never saw other, believe its gloom to be day; nor are their successors more aware that the deepening darkness is the contrary, until night drops big like a great clap of thunder, and awakes them staringly to a pitiable sense of their condition. But, if we cannot have this experience through ourselves, we can through others; and that will show us that Pagan art has once—nay twice—already brought over Christian art a "darkness which might be felt;" from a little handful cloud out of the studio of Squarcione, it gathered density and volume through his scholar Mantegna—made itself a nucleus in the Academy of the Medici, and thence it issued in such a flood of "heathenesse" that Italy finally became covered with one vast deep and thick night of Pagandom. But in every deep there is a lower deep; and, through the same gods-worship, a night intenser still fell upon art when the pantomime of David

made its appearance. With these two fearful lessons before his eyes, the modern artist can have no other than a settled conviction that Pagan art, Devil-like, glozes but to seduce—tempts but to betray; and hence, he chooses to avoid that which he believes to be bad, and to follow that which he holds to be good, and blots out from his eye and memory all art between the present and its first taint of heathenism, and ascends to the art previous to Raffaelle; and he ascends thither, not so much for its forms as he does for its THOUGHT and NATURE—the root and trunk of the art-tree, of whose numerous branches form is only one—though the most important one: and he goes to pre-Raffaelle art for those two things, because the stream at that point is clearer and deeper, and less polluted with animal impurities, than at any other in its course. And, Kalon and Kosmon, had you remembered this, and at the same time recollected that the words "Nature" and "Thought" express very peculiar ideas to modern eyes and ears—ideas which are totally unknown to Hellenic Art—you would have instantly felt, that the artist cannot study from it things chiefest in importance to him—of which it is destitute, even as is a shore-driven boulder of life and verdure.

On a Whit-sunday morn in the month of May.

THE sun looked over the highest hills,
And down in the vales looked he;
And sprang up blithe all things of life,
And put forth their energy;
The flowers creeped out their tender cups,
And offered their dewy fee;
And rivers and rills they shimmered along
Their winding ways to the sea;
And the little birds their morning song
Trilled forth from every tree,
On a Whit-sunday morn in the month of May.

Lord Thomas he rose and donned his clothes;
For he was a sleepless man:
And ever he tried to change his thoughts,
Yet ever they one way ran.

He to catch the breeze through the apple trees,
By the orchard path did stray,
Till he was aware of a lady there
Came walking adown that way :
Out gushed the song the trees among
Then soared and sank away,
On a Whit-sunday morn in the month of May.

With eyes down-cast care-slow she came,
Heedless of shine or shade,
Or the dewy grass that wetted her feet,
And heavy her dress all made :
Oh trembled the song the trees among,
And all at once was stayed,
On a Whit-sunday morn in the month of May.

Lord Thomas he was a truth-fast knight,
And a calm-eyed man was he.
He pledged his troth to his mother's maid
A damsel of low degree :
He spoke her fair, he spoke her true
And well to him listened she.
He gave her a kiss, she gave him twain
All beneath an apple tree :
The little birds trilled, the little birds filled
The air with their melody,
On a Whit-sunday morn in the month of May.

A goodly sight it was, I ween,
This loving couple to see,
For he was a tall and a stately man,
And a queenly shape had she.
With arms each laced round other's waist,
Through the orchard paths they tread
With gliding pace, face mixed with face,
Yet never a word they said :
Oh ! soared the song the birds among,
And seemed with a rapture sped,
On a Whit-sunday morn in the month of May.

The dew-wet grass all through they pass,
The orchard they compass round ;
Save words like sighs and swimming eyes
No utterance they found.

Upon his chest she leaned her breast,
And nestled her small, small head,
And cast a look so sad, that shook
Him all with the meaning said:
Oh hushed was the song the trees among,
As over there sailed a gled,
On a Whit-sunday morn in the month of May.

Then forth with a faltering voice there came,
"Ah would Lord Thomas for thee
That I were come of a lineage high,
And not of a low degree."
Lord Thomas her lips with his fingers touched,
And stilled her all with his ee':
"Dear Ella! Dear Ella!" he said,
"Beyond all my ancestry
Is this dower of thine—that precious thing,
Dear Ella, thy purity.
Thee will I wed—lift up thy head—
All I have I give to thee—
Yes—all that is mine is also thine—
My lands and my ancestry."
The little birds sang and the orchard rang
With a heavenly melody,
On a Whit-sunday morn in the month of May.

Modern Giants.

Yes! there are Giants on the earth in these days; but it is their great bulk, and the nearness of our view, which prevents us from perceiving their grandeur. This is how it is that the glory of the present is lost upon the contemporaries of the greatest men; and, perhaps this was Swift's meaning, when he said that Gulliver could not discover exactly what it was that strode among the corn-ridges in the Brobdignagian field: thus, we lose the brightness of things of our own time in consequence of their proximity.

It is of the development of our individual perceptions, and the application thereof to a good use, that the writer humbly endeavours to treat. We will for this purpose take as an example, that which may be held to indicate the civilization of a period more than any thing else; namely, the popular perceptions of the essentials of

Poetry; and endeavour to show that while the beauties of old writers are acknowledged, (tho' not in proportion to the attention of each individual in his works to nature alone) the modern school is contemned and unconsidered; and also that much of the active poetry of modern life is neglected by the majority of the writers themselves.

There seems to be an opinion gaining ground fast, in spite of all the shaking of conventional heads, that the Poets of the present day are equal to all others, excepting one: however this may be, it is certain we are not fair judges, because of the natural reason stated before; and there is decidedly one great fault in the moderns, that not only do they study models with which they can never become intimately acquainted, but that they neglect, or rather reject as worthless, that which they alone can carry on with perfect success: I mean the knowledge of themselves, and the characteristics of their own actual living. Thus, if a modern Poet or Artist (the latter much more culpably errs) seeks a subject exemplifying charity, he rambles into ancient Greece or Rome, awakening not one half the sympathy in the spectator, as do such incidents as may be seen in the streets every day. For instance; walking with a friend the other day, we met an old woman, exceedingly dirty, restlessly pattering along the kerb of a crowded thoroughfare, trying to cross: her eyes were always wandering here and there, and her mouth was never still; her object was evident, but for my own part, I must needs be fastidious and prefer to allow her to take the risk of being run over, to overcoming my own disgust. Not so my friend; he marched up manfully, and putting his arm over the old woman's shoulder, led her across as carefully as though she were a princess. Of course, I was ashamed: ashamed! I was frightened; I expected to see the old woman change into a tall angel and take him off to heaven, leaving me her original shape to repent in. On recovering my thoughts, I was inclined to take up my friend and carry him home in triumph, I felt so strong. Why should not this thing be as poetical as any in the life of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary or any one else? for, so we look at it with a pure thought, we shall see about it the same light the Areopagite saw at Jerusalem surround the Holy Virgin, and the same angels attending and guarding it.

And there is something else we miss; there is the poetry of the things about us; our railways, factories, mines, roaring cities, steam vessels, and the endless novelties and wonders produced every day; which if they were found only in the Thousand and One Nights, or in any poem classical or romantic, would be gloried over without end; for as the majority of us know not a bit more about them,

but merely their names, we keep up the same mystery, the main thing required for the surprise of the imagination.

Next to Poetry, Painting and Music have most power over the mind; and how do you apply this influence? In what direction is it forced? Why, for the last, you sit in your drawing-rooms, and listen to a quantity of tinkling of brazen marches of going to war; but you never see before your very eyes, the palpable victory of leading nature by her own power, to a conquest of blessings; and when the music is over, you turn to each other, and enthusiastically whisper, "How fine!"—You point out to others, (as if they had no eyes) the sentiment of a flowing river with the moon on it, as an emblem of the after-peace, but you see not this in the long white cloud of steam, the locomotive pours forth under the same moon, rushing on; the perfect type of the same, with the presentment of the struggle beforehand. The strong engine is never before you, sighing all night, with the white cloud above the chimney-shaft, escaping like the spirits Solomon put his seal upon, in the Arabian Tales; these mightier spirits are bound in a faster vessel; and then let forth, as of little worth, when their work is done.

The Earth shakes under you, from the footfall of the Genii man has made, and you groan about the noise. Vast roads draw together the Earth, and you say how they spoil the prospect, which you never cared a farthing about before.

You revel in Geology: but in chemistry, the modern science, possessing thousands of powers as great as any used yet, you see no glory:—the only thought is so many Acids and Alkalies. You require a metaphor for treachery, and of course you think of our puny old friend the Viper; but the Alkaline, more searching and more unknown, that may destroy you and your race, you have never heard of,—and yet this possesses more of the very quality required, namely, mystery, than any other that is in your hands.

The only ancient character you have retained in its proper force is Love; but you seem never to see any light about the results of long labour of mind, the most intense Love. Devotedness, magnanimity, generosity, you seem to think have left the Earth since the Crusades. In fact, you never go out into Life: living only in the past world, you go on repeating in new combinations the same elements for the same effect. You have taught an enlightened Public, that the province of Poetry is to reproduce the Ancients; not as Keats did, with the living heart of our own Life; but so as to cause the impression that you are not aware that they had wives and families like yourselves, and laboured and rested like us all.

The greatest, perhaps, of modern poets seeming to take refuge

from this, has looked into the heart of man, and shown you its pulsations, fears, self-doubts, hates, goodness, devotedness, and noble world-love; this is not done under pretty flowers of metaphor in the lispings of a pet parson, or in the strong but uncertain fashion of the American school; still less in the dry operose quackery of professed doctors of psychology, mere chaff not studied from nature, and therefore worthless, never felt, and therefore useless; but with the firm knowing hand of the anatomist, demonstrating and making clear to others, that the knowledge may be applied to purpose. All this difficult task is achieved so that you may read till your own soul is before you, and you know it; but the enervated public complains that the work is obscure forsooth: so we are always looking for green grass—verdant meads, tall pines, vineyards, etc., as the essentials of poetry; these are all very pretty and very delicate, the dust blows not in your eyes, but Chaucer has told us all this, and while it was new, far better than any one else; why are we not to have something besides? Let us see a little of the poetry of man's own works,—

"Visibly in his garden walketh God."

The great portion of the public take a morbid delight in such works as Frankenstein, that "Poor, impossible monster abhorred," who would be disgusting if he were not so extremely ludicrous: and all this search after impossible mystery, such trumpery! growing into the popular taste, is fed with garbage; doing more harm than all the preachings and poundings of optimistic Reviews will be able to remedy in an hundred years.

The study of such matters as these does other harm than merely poisoning the mind in one direction; it renders us sceptical of virtue in others, and we lose the power of pure perception. So—reading the glorious tale of Griselda and looking about you, you say there never was such a woman; your wise men say she was a fool; are there no such fools round about you? pray look close:—so the result of this is, you see no lesson in such things, or at least cannot apply it, and therefore the powers of the author are thrown away. Do you think God made Boccaccio and Chaucer to amuse you in your idle hours, only that you might sit listening like crowned idiots, and then debate concerning their faithfulness to truth? You never can imagine but they knew more of nature than any of us, or that they had less reverence for her.

In reference to Painting, the Public are taught to look with delight upon murky old masters, with dismally demoniac trees, and dull

waters of lead, colourless and like ice; upon rocks that make geologists wonder, their angles are so impossible, their fractures are so new. Thousands are given for uncomfortable Dutch sun-lights; but if you are shown a transcript of day itself, with the purple shadow upon the mountains, and across the still lake, you know nothing of it because your fathers never bought such: so you look for nothing in it; nay, let me set you in the actual place, let the water damp your feet, stand in the chill of the shadow itself, and you will never tell me the colour on the hill, or where the last of the crows caught the sinking sunlight. Letting observation sleep, what can you know of nature? and you *are* a judge of landscape indeed. So it is that the world is taught to think of nature, as seen through other men's eyes, without any reference to its own original powers of perception, and much natural beauty is lost.

To the Castle Ramparts.

The Castle is erect on the hill's top,
To moulder there all day and night: it stands
With the long shadow lying at its foot.
That is a weary height which you must climb
Before you reach it; and a dizziness
Turns in your eyes when you look down from it,
So standing clearly up into the sky.

I rose one day, having a mind to see it.
'Twas on a clear Spring morning, and a blackbird
Awoke me with his warbling near my window:
My dream had fashioned this into a song
That some one with grey eyes was singing me,
And which had drawn me so into myself
That all the other shapes of sleep were gone:
And then, at last, it woke me, as I said.
The sun shone fully in on me; and brisk
Cool airs, that had been cold but for his warmth,
Blew thro' the open casement, and sweet smells
Of flowers with the dew yet fresh upon them,—
Rose-buds, and showery lilacs, and what stayed
Of April wallflowers.

I set early forth,
Wishing to reach the Castle when the heat
Should weigh upon it, vertical at noon.
My path lay thro' green open fields at first,
With now and then trees rising statelily
Out of the grass; and afterwards came lanes
Closed in by hedges smelling of the may,
And overshadowed by the meeting trees.
So I walked on with none but pleasant thoughts;
The Spring was in me, not alone around me,
And smiles came rippling o'er my lips for nothing.
I reached at length,—issuing from a lane
Which wound so that it seemed about to end
Always, yet ended not for a long while,—
A space of ground thick grassed and level to
The overhanging sky and the strong sun:
Before me the brown sultry hill stood out,
Peaked by its rooted Castle, like a part
Of its own self. I laid me in the grass,
Turning from it, and looking on the sky,
And listening to the humming in the air
That hums when no sound is; because I chose
To gaze on that which I had left, not that
Which I had yet to see. As one who strives
After some knowledge known not till he sought,
Whose soul acquaints him that his step by step
Has led him to a few steps next the end,
Which he foresees already, waits a little
Before he passes onward, gathering
Together in his thoughts what he has done.

Rising after a while, the ascent began.
Broken and bare the soil was; and thin grass,
Dry and scarce green, was scattered here and there
In tufts: and, toiling up, my knees almost
Reaching my chin, one hand upon my knee,
Or grasping sometimes at the earth, I went,
With eyes fixed on the next step to be taken,
Not glancing right or left; till, at the end,
I stood straight up, and the tower stood straight up
Before my face. One tower, and nothing more;
For all the rest has gone this way and that,
And is not anywhere, saving a few

Fragments that lie about, some on the top,
Some fallen half down on either side the hill,
Uncared for, well nigh grown into the ground.
The tower is grey, and brown, and black, with green
Patches of mildew and of ivy woven
Over the sightless loopholes and the sides:
And from the ivy deaf-coiled spiders dangle,
Or scurry to catch food; and their fine webs
Touch at your face wherever you may pass.
The sun's light scorched upon it; and a fry
Of insects in one spot quivered for ever,
Out and in, in and out, with glancing wings
That caught the light, and buzzings here and there;
That little life which swarms about large death;
No one too many or too few, but each
Ordained, and being each in its own place.
The ancient door, cut deep into the wall,
And cramped with iron rusty now and rotten,
Was open half: and, when I strove to move it
That I might have free passage inwards, stood
Unmoved and creaking with old uselessness:
So, pushing it, I entered, while the dust
Was shaken down upon me from all sides.
The narrow stairs, lighted by scanty streaks
That poured in thro' the loopholes pierced high up,
Wound with the winding tower, until I gained,
Delivered from the closeness and the damp
And the dim air, the outer battlements.

There opposite, the tower's black turret-girth
Suppressed the multiplied steep chasm of fathoms,
So that immediately the fields far down
Lay to their heaving distance for the eyes,
Satisfied with one gaze unconsciously,
To pass to glory of heaven, and to know light.
Here was no need of thinking:—merely sense
Was found sufficient: the wind made me free,
Breathed, and returned by me in a hard breath:
And what at first seemed silence, being roused
By callings of the cuckoo from far off,
Resolved itself into a sound of trees
That swayed, and into chirps reciprocal
On each side, and revolving drone of flies.

Then, stepping to the brink, and looking sheer
To where the slope ceased in the level stretch
Of country, I sat down to lay my head
Backwards into a single ivy-bush
Complex of leaf. I lay there till the wind
Blew to me, from a church seen miles away,
Half the hour's chimes.

Great clouds were arched abroad
Like angels' wings; returning beneath which,
I lingered homewards. All their forms had merged
And loosened when my walk was ended; and,
While yet I saw the sun a perfect disc,
There was the moon beginning in the sky.

Pax Vobis.

'Tis of the Father Hilary.
He strove, but could not pray: so took
The darkened stair, where his feet shook
A sad blind echo. He kept up
Slowly. 'Twas a chill sway of air
That autumn noon within the stair,
Sick, dizzy, like a turning cup.
His brain perplexed him, void and thin:
He shut his eyes and felt it spin;
The obscure deafness hemmed him in.
He said: "the air is calm outside."

He leaned unto the gallery
Where the chime keeps the night and day:
It hurt his brain,—he could not pray.
He had his face upon the stone:
Deep 'twixt the narrow shafts, his eye
Passed all the roofs unto the sky
Whose greyness the wind swept alone.
Close by his feet he saw it shake
With wind in pools that the rains make:
The ripple set his eyes to ache.
He said, "Calm hath its peace outside."

He stood within the mystery
Girding God's blessed Eucharist:
The organ and the chaunt had ceased:
A few words paused against his ear,
Said from the altar: drawn round him,
The silence was at rest and dim.
He could not pray. The bell shook clear
And ceased. All was great awe,—the breath
Of God in man, that warranteth
Wholly the inner things of Faith.
He said: "There is the world outside."

Ghent: Church of St. Bavon.

A Modern Idyl.

"Pride clings to age, for few and withered powers,
Which fall on youth in pleasures manifold,
Like some bright dancer with a crowd of flowers
And scented presents more than she can hold:

"Or as it were a child beneath a tree,
Who in his healthy joy holds hand and cap
Beneath the shaken boughs, and eagerly
Expects the fruit to fall into his lap."

So thought I while my cousin sat alone,
Moving with many leaves in under tone,
And, sheened as snow lit by a pale moonlight,
Her childish dress struck clearly on the sight:
That, as the lilies growing by her side
Casting their silver radiance forth with pride,
She seemed to dart an arrowy halo round,
Brightening the spring time trees, brightening the ground;
And beauty, like keen lustre from a star,
Glorified all the garden near and far.
The sunlight smote the grey and mossy wall
Where, 'mid the leaves, the peaches one and all,
Most like twin cherubim entranced above,
Leaned their soft cheeks together, pressed in love.

As the child sat, the tendrils shook round her;
And, blended tenderly in middle air,
Gleamed the long orchard through the ivied gate:
And slanting sunbeams made the heart elate,
Startling it into gladness like the sound,—
Which echo childlike mimicks faintly round
Blending it with the lull of some far flood,—
Of one long shout heard in a quiet wood.
A gurgling laugh far off the fountain sent,
As if the mermaid shape that in it bent
Spoke with subdued and faintest melody:
And birds sang their whole hearts spontaneously.

When from your books released, pass here your hours,
Dear child, the sweet companion of these flowers,
These poplars, scented shrubs, and blossomed boughs
Of fruit-trees, where the noisy sparrows house,
Shaking from off the leaves the beaded dew.
Now while the air is warm, the heavens blue,
Give full abandonment to all your gay
Swift childlike impulses in rompish play;—
The while your sisters in shrill laughter shout,
Whirling above the leaves and round about,—
Until at length it drops behind the wall,—
With awkward jerks, the particoloured ball:
Winning a smile even from the stooping age
Of that old matron leaning on her page,
Who in the orchard takes a stroll or two,
Watching you closely yet unseen by you.

Then, tired of gambols, turn into the dark
Fir-skirted margins of your father's park;
And watch the moving shadows, as you pass,
Trace their dim network on the tufted grass,
And how on birch-trunks smooth and branches old,
The velvet moss bursts out in green and gold,
Like the rich lustre full and manifold
On breasts of birds that star the curtained gloom
From their glass cases in the drawing room.
Mark the spring leafage bend its tender spray
Gracefully on the sky's aërial grey;
And listen how the birds so voluble
Sing joyful pæans winding to a swell,

And how the wind, fitful and mournful, grieves
In gusty whirls among the dry red leaves;
And watch the minnows in the water cool,
And floating insects wrinkling all the pool.

So in your ramblings bend your earnest eyes.
  High thoughts and feelings will come unto you,—
  Gladness will fall upon your heart like dew,—
Because you love the earth and love the skies.

Fair pearl, the pride of all our family:
  Girt with the plenitude of joys so strong,
  Fashion and custom dull can do no wrong:
Nestling your young face thus on Nature's knee.

"Jesus Wept."

Mary rose up, as one in sleep might rise,
  And went to meet her brother's Friend: and they
  Who tarried with her said: "she goes to pray
And weep where her dead brother's body lies."
So, with their wringing of hands and with sighs,
  They stood before Him in the public way.
  "Had'st Thou been with him, Lord, upon that day,
He had not died," she said, drooping her eyes.
Mary and Martha with bowed faces kept
  Holding His garments, one on each side.—"Where
    Have ye laid him?" He asked. "Lord, come and see."—
    The sound of grieving voices heavily
  And universally was round Him there,
A sound that smote His spirit. Jesus wept.

Sonnets for Pictures.

1.

A Virgin and Child, by Hans Memmeling; in the Academy of Bruges.

Mystery: God, Man's Life, born into man
Of woman. There abideth on her brow
The ended pang of knowledge, the which now
Is calm assured. Since first her task began,
She hath known all. What more of anguish than
Endurance oft hath lived through, the whole space
Through night till night, passed weak upon her face
While like a heavy flood the darkness ran?
All hath been told her touching her dear Son,
And all shall be accomplished. Where he sits
Even now, a babe, he holds the symbol fruit
Perfect and chosen. Until God permits,
His soul's elect still have the absolute
Hush nether darkness, and make painful moan.

2.

A Marriage of St. Katharine, by the same; in the Hospital of St. John at Bruges.

Mystery: Katharine, the bride of Christ.
She kneels, and on her hand the holy Child
Setteth the ring. Her life is sad and mild,
Laid in God's knowledge—ever unenticed
From Him, and in the end thus fitly priced.
Awe, and the music that is near her, wrought
Of Angels, hath possessed her eyes in thought:
Her utter joy is her's, and hath sufficed.
There is a pause while Mary Virgin turns
The leaf, and reads. With eyes on the spread book,
That damsel at her knees reads after her.
John whom He loved and John His harbinger
Listen and watch. Whereon soe'er thou look,
The light is starred in gems, and the gold burns.

3.

A Dance of Nymphs, by Andrea Mantegna; in the Louvre.

(*** It is necessary to mention, that this picture would appear to have been in the artist's mind an allegory, which the modern spectator may seek vainly to interpret.)

Scarcely, I think; yet it indeed *may* be
The meaning reached him, when this music rang
Sharp through his brain, a distinct rapid pang,
And he beheld these rocks and that ridg'd sea.
But I believe he just leaned passively,
And felt their hair carried across his face
As each nymph passed him; nor gave ear to trace
How many feet; nor bent assuredly
His eyes from the blind fixedness of thought
To see the dancers. It is bitter glad
Even unto tears. Its meaning filleth it,
A portion of most secret life: to wit:—
Each human pulse shall keep the sense it had
With all, though the mind's labour run to nought.

4.

A Venetian Pastoral, by Giorgione; in the Louvre.

(*** In this picture, two cavaliers and an undraped woman are seated in the grass, with musical instruments, while another woman dips a vase into a well hard by, for water.)

Water, for anguish of the solstice,—yea,
Over the vessel's mouth still widening
Listlessly dipt to let the water in
With slow vague gurgle. Blue, and deep away,
The heat lies silent at the brink of day.
Now the hand trails upon the viol-string
That sobs; and the brown faces cease to sing,
Mournful with complete pleasure. Her eyes stray
In distance; through her lips the pipe doth creep
And leaves them pouting; the green shadowed grass
Is cool against her naked flesh. Let be:
Do not now speak unto her lest she weep,—
Nor name this ever. Be it as it was:—
Silence of heat, and solemn poetry.

5.

"Angelica rescued from the Sea-monster," by Ingres; in the Luxembourg.

A remote sky, prolonged to the sea's brim:
One rock-point standing buffetted alone,
Vexed at its base with a foul beast unknown,
Hell-spurge of geomaunt and teraphim:
A knight, and a winged creature bearing him,
Reared at the rock: a woman fettered there,
Leaning into the hollow with loose hair
And throat let back and heartsick trail of limb.
The sky is harsh, and the sea shrewd and salt.
Under his lord, the griffin-horse ramps blind
With rigid wings and tail. The spear's lithe stem
Thrills in the roaring of those jaws: behind,
The evil length of body chafes at fault.
She doth not hear nor see—she knows of them.

6.

The same.

Clench thine eyes now,—'tis the last instant, girl:
Draw in thy senses, set thy knees, and take
One breath for all: thy life is keen awake,—
Thou may'st not swoon. Was that the scattered whirl
Of its foam drenched thee?—or the waves that curl
And split, bleak spray wherein thy temples ache?—
Or was it his the champion's blood to flake
Thy flesh?—Or thine own blood's anointing, girl?....
....Now, silence; for the sea's is such a sound
As irks not silence; and except the sea,
All is now still. Now the dead thing doth cease
To writhe, and drifts. He turns to her: and she
Cast from the jaws of Death, remains there, bound,
Again a woman in her nakedness.

Papers of "The M. S. Society."

No. IV.

Smoke.

I'm king of the *Cadaverals*,
I'm *Spectral* President;
And, all from east to occident,
There's not a man whose dermal walls
Contain so narrow intervals,
So lank a resident.

Look at me and you shall see
The ghastliest of the ghastly;
The eyes that have watched a thousand years,
The forehead lined with a thousand cares,
The seaweed-character of hairs!—
You shall see and you shall see,
Or you may hear, as I can feel,
When the winds batter, how these *parchments* clatter,
And the beautiful tenor that's ever ringing
When thro' the *Seaweed* the breeze is singing:
And you should know, I know a great deal,
When the *bacchi arcanum* I clutch and gripe,
I know a great deal of wind and weather
By hearing my own cheeks slap together
A-pulling up a pipe.

I believe—and I conceive
I'm an authority
In all things ghastly,
First for tenuity,
For stringiness secondly,
And sallowness lastly—
I say I believe a cadaverous man
Who would live as *long* and as *lean* as he can
Should live entirely on bacchi—
On the bacchic ambrosia entirely feed him;
When living thus, so little lack I,
So easy am I, I'll never heed him
Who anything seeketh beyond the *Leaf*:
For, what with mumbling pipe-ends freely,
And snuffing the ashes now and then,
I give it as my firm belief
One might go living on genteelly
To the age of an antediluvian.

This from the king to each spectral *Grim*—
Mind, we address no *bibbing smoker*!
Tell not us 'tis as broad as it's long,
We've no breadth more than a leathern thong
Tanned—or a tarnished poker:
Ye are also lank and slim?—
Your king he comes of an ancient *line*
Which "length without breadth" the Gods define,
And look ye follow him!
Lanky lieges! the Gods one day
Will cut off this *line*, as geometers say,
Equal to any given line:—
PI *ag* PE PI,—PE—their hands divine
Do more than we can see:
They cut off every length of clay
Really in a most extraordinary way—
Then fill your bowls up—Dutch C'naster,
Shag, York River—fill 'em faster,
Fill 'em faster up, I say.
What Turkey, Oronoko, Cavendish!
There's the fuel to make a chafing dish,
A chafing dish to peel the petty
Paint that girls and boys call pretty—
Peel it off from lip and cheek:
We've none such here; yet, if ye seek
An infallible test for a raw beginner,
Mundungus will always discover a sinner.

Now ye are charged, we give the word
Light! and pour it thro' your noses,
And let it hover and lodge in your hair
Bird-like, bird-like—You're aware
Anacreon had a bird—
A bird! and filled *his* bowl with roses.
Ha ha! ye laugh in ghastlywise,
And the smoke comes through your eyes,
And you're looking very grim,
And the air is very dim,
And the casual paper flare
Taketh still a redder glare.

Now thou pretty little fellow,
Now thine eyes are turning yellow,
Thou shalt be our page to-night!
Come and sit thee next to us,

And as we may want a light
See that thou be dexterous.

Now bring forth your tractates musty,
Dry, cadaverous, and dusty,
One, on the sound of mammoths' bones
In motion ; one, on Druid-stones :
Show designs for pipes most ghastly,
And devils and ogres grinning nastily !
Show, show the limnings ye brought back,
Since round and round the zodiac
Ye galloped goblin horses which
Were light as smoke and black as pitch ;
And those ye made in the mouldy moon,
And Uranus, Saturn, and Neptune,
And in the planet Mercury,
Where all things living and dead have an eye
Which sometimes opening suddenly
Stareth and startleth strangëly.

But now the night is growing better,
And every jet of smoke grows *jetter*,
While yet there blinks sufficient light,
Bring in those skeletons that fright
Most men into fits, but that
We relish for their want of fat.
Bring them in, the Cimabues
With all or each that horribly true is,
Francias, Giottos, Masaccios,
That tread on the tops of their bony toes,
And every one with a long sharp arrow
Cleverly shot through his spinal marrow,
With plenty of gridirons, spikes, and fires
And fiddling angels in sheets and quires.

Hold ! 'tis dark ! 'tis lack of light,
Or something wrong in this royal sight,
Or else our musty, dusty, and right
Well-beloved lieges all
Are standing in rank against the wall,
And ever thin and thinner, and tall
And taller grow and *cadaveral !*
Subjects, ye are sharp and spare,
Every nose is blue and frosty,
And your back-bone's growing bare,

And your king can count your *costæ*,
And your bones are clattering,
And your teeth are chattering,
And ye spit out bits of pipe,
Which, shorter grown, ye faster gripe
In jaws; and weave a cloudy cloak
That wraps up all except your bones
Whose every joint is oozing smoke:
And there's a creaky music drones
Whenas your lungs distend your ribs,
A sound, that's like the grating nibs
Of pens on paper late at night;
Your shanks are yellow more than white
And very like what Holbein drew!
Avaunt! ye are a ghastly crew
Too like the Campo Santo—down!
We are your monarch, but we own
That were we not, we very well
Might take ye to be imps of hell:
But ye are glorious ghastly sprites,
What ho! our page! Sir knave—lights, lights,
The final pipes are to be lit:
Sit, gentlemen, we charge ye sit
Until the cock affrays the night
And heralds in the limping morn,
And makes the owl and raven flit;
Until the jolly moon is white,
And till the stars and moon are gone.

No. V.

Rain.

The chamber is lonely and light;
Outside there is nothing but night—
And wind and a creeping rain.
And the rain clings to the pane:
And heavy and drear's
The night; and the tears
Of heaven are dropt in pain.

And the tears of heaven are dropt in pain;
And man pains heaven and shuts the rain
Outside, and sleeps: and winds are sighing;
And turning worlds sing mass for the dying.

Reviews.

Christmas Eve and Easter Day: by Robert Browning.—Chapman and Hall. 1850.

THERE are occasions when the office of the critic becomes almost simply that of an expositor; when his duty is not to assert, but to interpret. It is his privilege to have been the first to study a subject, and become familiar with it; what remains is to state facts, and to suggest considerations; not to lay down dogmas. That which he speaks of is to him itself a dogma; he starts from conviction: his it is to convince others, and, as far as may be, by the same means as satisfied himself; to incite to the same study, doing his poor best, meanwhile, to supply the present want of it.

Thus much, indeed, is the critic's duty always; but he generally feels the right, and has it, of speaking with authority. He condemns, or gives praise; and his judgment, though merely individual and subject to revision, is judgment. Before the certainty of genius and deathless power, in the contemplation of consummate art, his position changes: and well for him if he knows, and is contented it should be so. Here he must follow, happy if he only follows and serves; and while even here he will not shelve his doubts, or blindly refuse to exercise a candid discrimination, his demur at unquestioning assent, far from betraying any arrogance, will be discreetly advanced, and on clearly stated grounds.

Of all poets, there is none more than Robert Browning, in approaching whom diffidence is necessary. The mere extent of his information cannot pass unobserved, either as a fact, or as a title to respect. No one who has read the body of his works will deny that they are replete with mental and speculative subtlety, with vivid and most diversified conception of character, with dramatic incident and feeling; with that intimate knowledge of outward nature which makes every sentence of description a living truth; replete with a most human tenderness and pathos. Common as is the accusation of "extravagance," and unhesitatingly as it is applied, in a general off-hand style, to the entire character of Browning's poems, it would require some jesuitism of self-persuasion to induce any one to affirm his belief in the existence of such extravagance in the conception of the poems, or in the sentiments expressed; of any want of concentration in thought, of national or historical keeping. Far from this, indeed, a deliberate unity of purpose is strikingly apparent. Without referring for the present

to what are assumed to be perverse faults of execution—a question the principles and bearings of which will shortly be considered—assuredly the mention of the names of a few among Browning's poems—of "Paracelsus," "Pippa Passes," "Luria," the "Soul's Tragedy," "King Victor and King Charles," even of the less perfect achievement, "Strafford"; or, passing to the smaller poems, of "The Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," "The Laboratory," and "The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's";—will at once realize to the memory of all readers an abstruse ideal never lost sight of, and treated to the extreme of elaboration. As regards this point, we address all in any manner acquainted with the poet's works, certain of receiving an affirmative answer even from those who "*can't* read Sordello, or understand the object of writing in that style."

If so many exceptions to Browning's "system of extravagance" be admitted,—and we again refer for confirmation or refutation to all who have sincerely read him, and who, valuing written criticism at its worth, value also at *its* worth the criticism of individual conviction,—wherein are we to seek this extravagance? The groundwork exempted, the imputation attaches, if anywhere, to the framework; to the body, if not to the soul. And we are thus left to consider the style, or mode of expression.

Style is not stationary, or, *in the concrete*, matter of principle: style is, firstly, national; next, chronological; and lastly, individual. To try the oriental system by the European, and pronounce either wrong by so much as it exceeds or falls short, would imply so entire a want of comprehensive appreciation as can scarcely fail to induce the conviction, that the two are distinct and independent, each to be tested on its own merits. Again, were the Elizabethan dramatists right, or are those of our own day? Neither absolutely, as by comparison alone; his period speaks in each; and each must be judged by this: not whether he is true to any given type, but whether his own type be a true one for himself. And this, which holds good between nations and ages, holds good also between individuals. Very different from Shelley's are Wordsworth's nature in description, his sentiment, his love; Burns's and Keats's different from these and from each other: yet are all these, nature, and sentiment, and love.

But here it will be urged: by this process any and every style is pronounced good, so that it but find a measure of recognition in its own age and country; nay, even the author's self-approval will be sufficient. And, as a corollary, each age must and ought to reject its predecessor; and Voltaire was no less than right in dubbing

Shakspere barbarian. That it is not so, however, will appear when the last element of truth in style, that with which all others combine, which includes and implies consistency with the author's self, with his age and his country, is taken into account. Appropriateness of treatment to subject it is which lies at the root of all controversy on style: this is the last and the whole test. And the fact that none other is requisite, or, more strictly, that all others are but aspects of this one, will very easily be allowed when it is reflected that the subject, to be of an earnest and sincere ideal, must be an emanation of the poet's most secret soul; and that the soul receives teaching from circumstance, which is the time when and place where.

This premised, it must next be borne in mind that the poet's conception of his subject is not identical with, and, in the majority of cases, will be unlike, his reader's. And, the question of style (manner) being necessarily subordinate to that of subject (matter), it is not for the reader to dispute with the author on his mode of rendering, provided that should be accepted as embodying (within the bounds of grammatical logic) the intention preconceived. The object of the poet in writing, why he attempts to describe an event as resulting from this cause or this, or why he assumes such as the effect; all these considerations the reader is competent to entertain: any two men may deduce from the same premises, and may probably arrive at different conclusions: but, these conclusions reached, what remains is a question of resemblance, which each must determine for himself, as best conscious of his own intention. To take an instance. Shakspere's conception of Macbeth as a man capable of uttering a pompous conceit—

("Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood—")

in a moment, to him, and to all present, of startling purport, may be a correct or an impressive conception, or it may be the reverse. That the rendering of the momentary intention is adequate here there is no reason to doubt. If so, in what respect is the reader called upon to investigate a matter of style? He must simply return to the question of whether this point of character be consistent with others imagined of the same person; this, answered affirmatively, is an approval,—negatively, a condemnation, of *intention;* the merit of *style*, in either case, being mere competence, and that admitted irrespectively of the reader's liking or disliking of the passage *per se*, or as part of a context. Why, in this same tragedy of Macbeth, is a drunken porter introduced between a murder and its discovery? Did Shakspere really intend him to be a sharp-witted

man? These questions are pertinent and necessary. There is no room for disputing that this scene is purposely a comic scene: and, if this is certain, the style of the speech is appropriate to the scene, and of the scene, to the conception of the drama? Is *that conception* admirable?

We have entered thus at length on the investigation of adequacy and appropriateness of style, and of the mode by which entire classes of disputable points, usually judged under that name, may be reduced to the more essential element of conception; because it will be almost invariably found, that a mere arbitrary standard of irresponsible private predilection is then resorted to. Nor can this be well guarded against. The concrete, *style*, being assumed as always constituting an entity auxiliary to, but not of necessity modified by, and representing subject,—as something substantially pre-existing in the author's mind or practice, and belonging to him individually; the reader will, not without show of reason, betake himself to the trial of personality by personality, another's by his own; and will thus pronounce on poems or passages of poems not as elevated, or vigorous, or well-sustained, or the opposite, in idea, but, according to certain notions of his own, as attractive, original, or conventional writing.

Thus far as regards those parts of execution which concern human* embodiment—the metaphysical and dramatic or epic faculties. Of style in description the reader is more nearly as competent a judge as the writer. In the one case, the poet is bound to realize an idea, which is his own, and the justness of which, and therefore of the form of its expression, can be decided only by reasoning and analogy; in the other, having for his type material phænomena, he must reproduce the things as cognizable by all, though not hereby in any way exempt from adhering absolutely to his proper perception of them. Here, even as to ideal description or simile, the reader can assert its truth or falsehood of purpose, its sufficiency or insufficiency of means: but here again he must beware of exceeding his rights, and of substituting himself to his author. He must not dictate under what aspect nature is to be considered, stigmatizing the one chosen, because his own bent is rather towards some other. In the exercise of censure, he cannot fairly allow any personal *peculiarities* of view to influence him; but will have to decide from common grounds of perception, unless clearly conscious of

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* In employing the word "human," we would have our intention understood to include organic spiritualism—the superhuman treated, from a human *pou sto*, as ideal mind, form, power, action, &c.

short-coming, or of the extreme of any corresponding peculiarity on the author's part.

In speaking of the adaptation of style to conception, we advanced that, details of character and of action being a portion of the latter, the real point to determine in reference to the former is, whether such details are completely rendered in relation to the general purpose. And here, to return to Robert Browning, we would enforce on the attention of those among his readers who assume that he spoils fine thoughts by a vicious, extravagant, and involved style, a few analytic questions, to be answered unbiassed by hearsay evidence. Concerning the dramatic works: Is the leading idea conspicuously brought forward throughout each work? Is the language of the several speakers such as does not create any impression other than that warranted by the subject matter of each? If so, does it create the impression apparently intended? Is the character of speech varied according to that of the speaker? Are the passages of description and abstract reflection so introduced as to add to poetic, without detracting from dramatic, excellence? About the narrative poems, and those of a more occasional and personal quality the same questions may be asked with some obvious adaptation; and this about all:—Are the versification strong, the sound sharp or soft, monotonous, hurried, in proportion to the requirements of sense; the illustrative thoughts apt and new; the humour quaint and relishing? Finally, is not in many cases that which is spoken of as something extraneous, dragged in aforethought, for the purpose of singularity, the result more truly of a most earnest and single-minded labor after the utmost rendering of idiomatic conversational truth; the rejection of all stop-gap words; about the most literal transcript of fact compatible with the ends of poetry and true feeling for Art? This a point worthy note, and not capable of contradiction.*

These questions answered categorically will, we believe, be found to establish the assurance that Browning's style is copious, and certainly not other than appropriate,—instance contrasted with instance—as the form of expression bestowed on the several phases of a certain ever-present form of thought. We have already endeavored to show that, where style is not inadequate, its object as a means being attained, the mind must revert to its decision as to relative and collective value of intention: and we will again leave

* We may instance several scenes of "Pippa Passes,"—the concluding one especially, where Pippa reviews her day; the whole of the "Soul's Tragedy,"—the poetic as well as the prose portion; "The Flight of the Duchess;" "Waring," &c.; and passages continually recurring in "Sordello," and in "Colombe's Birthday."

Browning's manifestations of intellectual purpose, as such, for the verdict of his readers.

To those who yet insist: "Why cannot I read Sordello?" we can only answer:—Admitted a leading idea, not only metaphysical but subtle and complicated to the highest degree; how work out this idea, unless through the finest intricacy of shades of mental development? Admitted a philosophic comprehensiveness of historical estimate and a minuteness of familiarity with details, with the added assumption, besides, of speaking with the very voice of the times; how present this position, unless by standing at an eminent point, and addressing thence a not unprepared audience? Admitted an intense aching concentration of thought; how be self-consistent, unless uttering words condensed to the limits of language?—And let us at last say: Read Sordello again. Why hold firm that you ought to be able at once to know Browning's stops, and to pluck out the heart of his mystery? Surely, if you do not understand him, the fact tells two ways. But, if you *will* understand him, you shall.

We have been desirous to explain and justify the state of feeling in which we enter on the consideration of a new poem by Robert Browning. Those who already feel with us will scarcely be disposed to forgive the prolixity which, for the present, has put it out of our power to come at the work itself: but, if earnestness of intention will plead our excuse, we need seek for no other.

The Evil under the Sun.

How long, oh Lord?—The voice is sounding still,
  Not only heard beneath the altar stone,
  Not heard of John Evangelist alone
In Patmos. It doth cry aloud and will
Between the earth's end and earth's end, until
  The day of the great reckoning, bone for bone,
  And blood for righteous blood, and groan for groan:
Then shall it cease on the air with a sudden thrill;
Not slowly growing fainter if the rod
  Strikes one or two amid the evil throng,
  Or one oppressor's hand is stayed and numbs,—
  Not till the vengeance that is coming comes:
For shall all hear the voice excepting God?
  Or God not listen, hearing?—Lord, how long?

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Conducted principally by Artists.

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